

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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In These Pages

Lutheran Unity in Japan	1
Seikokai to Conduct Church-Wide Survey	2
YM and YW Delegates to Seoul	3
Jotaro Kawakami Elected Head of Japan Socialist Party	3
Scripture Distribution Tops Non-Fiction Sales	3
ICU Church	4

LUTHERAN UNITY IN JAPAN

Since the arrival of United Lutheran Synod in the South (U.S.) missionaries on April 2, 1893, in Saga City, Kyushu, the Lutheran church has extended its work in Japan until at present there are twelve Lutheran missionary societies from four countries spread over the length of Japan. All but two of these began work after World War II and most are working independently of one another. The following six churches from the U.S. are represented by missionary societies in Japan: United Lutheran Church of America, The American Lutheran Church, Augustana Lutheran Church, Suomi Synod Lutheran Church, Lutheran Brethern, and Lutheran Church, Mo. Synod. Norway is represented by three societies: Norwegian Missionary Society, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, and Lutheran Free Church of Norway Mission. The Christian Mission to Buddhists as well as the Danish Missionary Society are from Denmark. The Finnish Lutheran Missionary Society began work in Japan in 1900.

In 1951 these various bodies combined to form an "All Lutheran Free Confernce," which led to the forming of the Lutheran Unity Committee. This committee, composed of two members from each of the above-mentioned groups and from the Japan Lutheran Church, studied the possibility of a united Lutheran Church in Japan.

The Mo. Synod and the Lutheran Brethern groups eventually withdrew. The Unity Committee, under the worthy leadership of Dr. Olaf Hansen and Rev. David Vikner, finished its work in March, 1957, at which time a "doctrinal witness" was agreed upon, as well as a detailed statement of "organization recommendations." A doctrinal statement as such was never felt necessary for union. A Constitution Committee, with a larger proportion of Japanese members, succeeded the Unity Committee.

This Consitution Committee, chaired by Dr. Chitose Kishi, president of the Japan Lutheran Church, met in Kobe on March 6-7 1961 to approved revisions which will produce the fifth and final draft of the projected constitution and by-laws for the new united church. The chief problems encountered have been those pertaining to the balance of national church authority and district authority, theological education and ordination of the clergy.

Also decided at the Kobe meeting was the time-table from here to the inception of the new church. On November 23, 1961, a "meeting of declaration to unite" will choose a Preparation Committee to draw up special agreement between the new church and mission boards, to make proposals regarding church rites, etc. This work is to be completed by Reformation Day, 1962, when the Constituting Convention of the new church will be held.

Thus, by January, 1963, the year which marks the 10th anniversary of the unity negotiations and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Japan Lutheran Church, a unified Lutheran Church will be functioning in Japan.

SEIKOKAI TO CONDUCT CHURCH-WIDE SURVEY

Department of Evangelism heads of each diocese of the Seikokai (Anglican-Episcopal Church) met at Takarazuka for three days in mid-January.

On the first evening Ogazawara, Chubu diocese head, reported on his Russian tour of last summer. K. Horie led a group discussion on the Relating of Education and Evangelism in the Seikokai on the following evening.

On the third day, at the request of the Central Evangelism Department, it was decided to conduct a church-wide survey of the following areas:

1. Vital statistics on each member, i.e., how each member became a Christian, when their interest was first aroused, etc.
2. Attendance - motivation for steady attendance.
3. Forms and character of lay participation.
4. Policy and concrete methods of evangelism - appraisal of the relative success of various methods.

This will be the first time such a church-wide survey is to be carried out by the Seikokai and it is expected to provide necessary source material for future evangelism plans.

YM AND YW DELEGATES TO SEOUL

In spite of the "delicate" political situation existing between Japan and Korea, efforts are being made to increase and deepen Christian fellowship ties.

Last summer three Japanese students participated in an International Christian Work Camp located in Korea. Also, NCC is studying the possibility of sending a good-will ambassador to Korea.

Now at the invitation of the Korean Student Christian Council (KSCC), six representatives from the YMCA and YWCA will soon be leaving for Seoul to attend a youth leaders conference on March 24-26. Two "Y" leaders are to be accompanied by two student members from each the YM and the YW.

Expenses to Pusan will be paid by the Japanese with the remaining costs being met by Korean sources.

JOTARO KAWAKAMI ELECTED HEAD OF JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY

Jotaro Kawakami, an elder of Ginza Church in Tokyo, has been elected chairman of the Japan Socialist Party. Kawakami has been active in labor movements since before the war and was considered the logical successor to the recently assassinated Inejiro Asanuma. Kawakami is the leader of the right-wing group within the Socialist Party.

Born in a Christian family, he is faithful in church attendance. His father, a carpenter, was a well know street preacher. His wife is a daughter of the former Methodist Bishop Hiraiwa. Tamio, Kawakami's eldest son, is a lecturer at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary; and, his daughter, Kazuko Ijuin, is a member of the YWCA executive committee.

Newspapers refer to him as the "jujika iincho" (Christian Chairman). There are at present twenty-two Christian diet members, these meet every Wednesday morning for prayer.

SCRIPTURE DISTRIBUTION TOPS NON-FICTION SALES

According to the Shukan Dokushojin (Reader's Weekly) of January 30, 1961, the leading non-fiction seller for 1960 was Atama no Yoku Naru Hon (A Book on Mind Improvement) with 420,000 sales. Seiseikatsu no Chie (Sex-Life Knowledge) was in second place with 360,000 volumes sold. However, Japan Bible Society announces that Bible and Scripture portion distribution far surpasses these with the amazing total of 1,886,909. This is the second straight year that the Bible has led.

The Japan Bible Society, utilizing the colportage system, covers the country systematically with the aid of military maps. Japan is divided into ten districts to each of which a team of colporters is assigned. Team members report in to their respective teams captains who in turn send in a progress report to JBS headquarters. In this manner every house in the country is to be contacted.

Forty full-time colporters receive a salary plus a small commission on their sales. Only those who have been active in his or her church for years are engaged and these are given three months of training before being sent out.

ICU CHURCH

The International Christian University became an associate member of the Japan NCC in February, marking the beginning of an association that is expected to provide significant enrichment to the Community in Christ in this country.

Since ICU got started a decade ago the ICU Church has existed side by side with the University. Spiritually, it is an integral part of the University. The pastor, the Rev. Dr. Yasuo Furuya, serves on the faculty and the church office is also the office of the university's religious life and program. The ICU Church also reaches out into the surrounding communities, from which many of its members are drawn.

At least 10 nationalities are represented in the membership, and several more confessional groups. Services are bilingual (Japanese and English), and worshipers make use of wireless receivers to pick up simultaneous translations. Sunday School classes are conducted for both Japanese and non-Japanese children, and the church is actively engaged in benevolence, missions and evangelical work.

The purposes of the ICU Church are stated as follows: "first, to create an all-inclusive Christian fellowship of those who sincerely endeavor to know and serve God; second, to enhance the religious and educational program of the International Christian University; and third, to extend the Christian ministry to all men in the Spirit of Christ."

(ICU Public Information Office)

